DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 400 EC 200 218

AUTHOR Kucij, Daniel N.
TITLE Problems and Promises: Vocational Development for Disabled Youth in Honduras.
PUB DATE 17 Dec 85
NOTE 62p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (65th, Chicago, IL, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Developing Nations; *Disabilities; Educational Needs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employment Opportunities; Foreign Countries; Interviews; *Needs Assessment; Qualitative Research; *Vocational Rehabilitation
IDENTIFIERS *Honduras

ABSTRACT

Issues in vocational development for disabled youth in Honduras, Central America, were the focus of an intensive short-term qualitative research effort. Among the research objectives were identifying promising employment opportunities and determining areas where modest investments of technical assistance or other resources would have maximum impact. Researchers reviewed documents (previously completed surveys or reports) and on-site personal interviews with such individuals as employed and unemployed disabled youth, employers, parents of handicapped youth, technical assistance agencies, professional special education and rehabilitation personnel, and government officials. The introductory chapter is followed by nine chapters which deal with the following areas: problems and promises, the country, disabled people, employment/economy, employment of disabled youth, learning from experience, analysis and general observations, main findings and recommendations, and personal closing statements. A page of references concludes the document. The recommendations focus on activities to be conducted by an umbrella organization of special education, training, rehabilitation and advocacy groups. Activities will include a public awareness campaign, professional training, encouragement of integrated school services, and creation of three employment generation activities. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED284400

Proposal for Presentation at CEC's 65th Annual Convention
Chicago, Illinois
April 20-24, 1987

Title: **Problems and Promises:** Vocational Development for Disabled Youth in Honduras.

Presenter: Daniel N. Kucij,
Assistant Superintendent
Franklin Central Supervisory Union
40 Kingman Street
St. Albans, Vermont 05478
(802) 524-9463

Mode: Lecture

Audience: Special Education/Rehabilitation Professionals, Administrators, Teacher Educators, Researchers, Technical Assistance Agencies, Others with International Concerns.

EC 200218

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Daniel N. Kucij
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PROBLEMS AND PROMISES: Vocational Development for Disabled Youth in Honduras

A Partners of the Americas Project to Develop New Income Generation Strategies for Disabled Young People

Daniel N. Kucij, M.Ed.

December 17, 1985

ABSTRACT

The problems and promises of vocational development for disabled youth in Honduras, Central America are the focus of this intensive, short-term, qualitative research effort. Major themes emerged in terms of barriers and opportunities for employment. Implications for educational planning and inter-agency collaboration are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page		i
Abstract		ii
Table of Contents		iii
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Problems and Promises	5
3.0	The Country	9
4.0	Disabled People	12
5.0	Employment/Economy	14
6.0	Employment of Disabled Youth	16
7.0	Learning from Experience	22
8.0	Analysis and General Observation	37
9.0	Main Findings and Recommendations	43
10.0	Personal Closing Statements	49
11.0	References	55

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The current high levels of unemployment and underemployment among the countries of Central America make job opportunity a major concern of young people. The economic situation falls heavily upon the shoulders of one particular segment of the population, the developmentally disabled. This group is not a high priority for local governments nor major assistance agencies whose primary focus is overall economic development. There is an underlying assumption that opportunities for those with disabilities must be held in abeyance pending improvement in the general economy and progress by the "normal", non-handicapped society.

Such discriminatory logic is challenged by the PATH Committee (Partners for Appropriate Technology for the Handicapped) of Partners of the Americas. The Partners believe that equity requires efforts toward progress be made for all minority groups simultaneously. To postpone such efforts is to further demean an already under-valued group whose capability and rights are yet to be realized. As a result of a major planning meeting held in Washington, D.C. during July 12-13, 1984, the area of job opportunities and vocational development was made one of the top organizational priorities for the five year period from 1985-89. The creation of job opportunities for disabled

persons will be stimulated via funding of small projects and technical assistance between the state-country partnerships.

This project was undertaken as the first step in the realization of the PATH priority in the area of job development for disabled youth. The major purpose is to examine barriers and opportunities for economic development by disabled youth. It is an intensive short-term research effort in the qualitative style to investigate the current employment status amoung disabled people, particularly youth, in Honduras. The research was carried out by a team of four people, each with expertise related to some aspect of the project. The team was composed of two members each from Vermont and Honduras. Each person generously volunteered their time and effort to the project.

The major research objectives include:

1. Assemble information relevant to a better understanding of job opportunities for the disabled.
2. Identify promising employment opportunites, with emphasis on self-employment.
3. Examine economic viability of existing operations employing disabled people.
4. Determine areas where modest investments of technical assistance, money or other resources will have greatest impact.
5. Suggest priorities for action by the Partnership.

The accomplishment of the objectives depended on two major sources of data: review of archival documents, and in-depth, on-site personal interviews. The data documents consist of research, surveys or reports previously done by other agencies or individuals and will be cited when referenced. Some of these documents are included in the appendix. They are sources of ethnographic, demographic and economic information. Their purpose is to provide a contextual background for the crux of the study, data gathered in the qualitative style via personal interview.

The research team conducted personal interviews across a spectrum of persons relevant to the economic status of disabled young people including:

1. employed and unemployed disabled youth.
2. employers and potential employers.
3. parents of handicapped youth.
4. technical assistance agencies.
5. professional special education and rehabilitation staff.
6. government servants and concerned others.

The goal of the interview process was to illuminate the nature of the problem as understood and interpreted by people directly involved in the life of Honduras. The researchers inductively developed themes or insights as they emerged via the interview process. Interviews were kept in

a natural, free-flowing mode, rather like a conversation. No attempt was made to create a standard interview format. It must be recognized that the need for translation back and forth between Spanish and English sections hindered this intention. However, every effort was made to follow the course of conversation so that sources of information could be explored rather than fit into preconceived, specific categories.

The format of this report as well as the methodology was specified in advance by the sponsoring agency to insure consistancy among the partnership research projects as well as to meet the Partners requirements. It is subdivided into twelve sections entitled:

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Problems and Promises
3.0 The Country
4.0 Disabled People
5.0 Employment/Economy
6.0 Employment of Disabled Youth
7.0 Learning from Experience
8.0 Analysis & General Observation
9.0 Main Findings & Recommendation
10.0 Personal Closing Statements
11.0 References
12.0 Attachments

2.0 PROBLEMS AND PROMISES

While verifiable statistics are hard to obtain in Honduras, information from a variety of field sources such as the Ministries of Education, Health and Labor, the Fundacion Hondurena de Rehabilitacion e Integracion del Limitado (Foundation), Peace Corps and others substantiates an endemic, pervasive poverty. Higher than average rates of disability are found. Recently gathered statistics for registered births in 1984, show that only 36,000 out of 60,000 survived past one year of age. Of those, 24,000 are considered to have not developed properly or to be delayed or impaired due to malnutrition. The Ministry of Education has data that indicate only 28 out of 100 students who enter 1st grade will finish 6th grade. Ricardo Alvarado, professor of economy in Guatemala, describes the trend of gross national product as negative in Latin America since 1981, per capita income is decreasing, inflation increasing, imports exceed exports, private and public investment is going down and unemployment which averages 45% (including under-employment below the minimum wage) is increasing.

These health, educational and economic conditions weigh heavily on the young in a country like Honduras where 51% of the current population is below the age of 15. Since the Foundation estimated at least 14% of the population to be

disabled, compared to the U.N.'s average estimate of 10% internationally, the effect on youth with handicapping conditions is devastating. Under these circumstances, the situation is critical.

Despite the over-whelming circumstances, the research team time and again met individuals who overcame the odds; we met people who are making a difference.

One person who comes to mind is Maria Silveria Rubia, Director of Fraternidad Cristiana de Limitadoes Fisicos (Christian Fellowship for the Physically Handicapped) and a primary school teacher in a southern Honduran town near the border with El Salvador. The organization is run entirely by people with disabilities, it works in communities all around Honduras with the goal of re-integrating the handicapped into society.

Maria had been working as a social welfare promoter until an auto accident left her legs paralyzed. Her employer paid for two months of hospitalization, at which time she was sent home with a wheelchair. Social security did not cover her, so her co-workers shared her job so that she could continue to receive an income for one year after which she was replaced. Pressure from her co-workers resulted in a L.100/mo. allowance from the government.

Maria said, "I felt I needed to work to demonstrate to the others (of Fraternidad) and to support myself and the organization financially." She decided to become a school teacher only to find out that there is a law barring persons with disabilities that inhibit their work, from teaching. Maria turned this barrier to her advantage, she took the definition of the word, disability, out of the dictionary and went to her potential employers to argue that she was not incapacitated and could do the job. Despite tentative approval from higher up, one middle-level individual blocked her way. Eventually, this person was persuaded via contact arranged by a mutual friend and he was convinced to change his mind.

Maria is now the Honduran national representative of Disabled Persons International, she travels on her own time all around Honduras to assist others in organizing support groups.

Orquedia Centano is another individual who has turned a problem into a promise. She contracted meningitis at age seven, after she had acquired language. Her parents thought that deafness could not be overcome as a learning problem and sought to institutionalize her; she resisted. Orquedia taught herself to read lips practicing in front of a mirror and completed normal school by hiding her deafness with the assistance of classmates who shared written notes with her.

Her first experience job hunting quickly taught her that "employment doors were closed to deaf people." "I decided to learn enough about lip-reading and people's character that I could pass for non-deaf." She heard that a local shoe manufacturer, Caprisa, was hiring based on tests open to the public. She took the test, but was not offered an interview. Somehow she discovered that she had received a top, excellent grade. This gave her the courage to approach the director and get an interview. She explained her situation and was given a chance to try out as assistant accountant. She immediately sought to learn the names of every person, supplier or material she would typically come in contact with because, "I didn't want anyone to ask me a question I couldn't answer."

Orquedia is currently a full accountant with the same firm, the company employs seven other individuals with deafness. Most of the supervisors and many co-workers have learned to sign to communicate with their colleagues in the noisy environment. She has been very active with the Asociacion de Sordos de Honduras (Deaf Association of Honduras).

3.0 THE COUNTRY

3.1 PROFILE This brief profile of Honduras is presented for the convenience of the reader. The primary sources were the U. S. State Department publication, Background Notes: Honduras, September, 1984, and Figures of Honduras, 1979-1984, published by the Economic Research Department, Tegucigalpa, D.C.

Nationality: Honduran(s)

Population: (1983) 4.2 Million

Annual Growth Rate: 3.6%

Ethnic Groups: Mestizos (Mixed Indian and European) 90%

European, Arabic, African, Oriental and Indian - Small percentage of each 10%

Religion: Roman Catholic with a small Protestant minority

Language: Spanish

Education: Six years of school are compulsory, however, only an estimated 70 % comply. Less than 16 % reach junior high.

Literacy: Estimated at 55%

Health: Infant mortality rate 78/1000

Life expectancy- 58.7 years

Work Force: 1 Million

Total	1,074,000
Agriculture,Forestry, Hunting and Fishing	572,200
Mining & Quarrying	41,000
Construction	46,000
Manufacturing	142,400
Electricity & Communications	42,900
Wholesale & Retail	103,000
Financial Sector	9,800
Other services	148,000

Area: 109,560 Square Kilometers equal to 452,300 square miles, an area about the size of Ohio, U.S.A.

Capital: Tegucigalpa. This city on the slopes of Mount Picacho began around 1539 as a small mining camp run by the Spanish and worked by the Indians. The Indian name is said to be a combination of "teguz" (hill) and "galpa" (silver).

Sub-divisions: The country is divided into 18 departments.

3.2 ECONOMY

GNP: In 1982 the GNP was 2.8 billion dollars with an annual growth rate of -1.1%

Per Capita Income: $590.

Inflation Rate: 9.4%

Natural Resources: Forest Products, Minerals and Fish

Agriculture: Products are coffee, bananas, corn, bean and livestock equal to 30% of the GNP

Industry: Textiles, cement, wood products, cigars equal to 17.3% of the GNP

Trade: Export trade amounts to $791 Million (F.O.B.). The major export items are bananas, coffee, beef, lumber, metals and sugar. The primary export market is to the U.S.

4.0 DISABLED PEOPLE: CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

Honduras is a country of four and a half million people. According to data provided by international organizations such as The Organization of American States, UNICEF, and the International Labor Organization it is estimated that at least 10% of the population of each Central American country suffers from some degree of handicapping condition. However, in Honduras the situation is a more severe. It is estimated that 10% of the population has developmental delays due to malnutrition and another 4% have other physical or sensory limitations. These figures give an estimate of at least 14 % or 630,000 people of the total population. Considering the level of health and the general economic conditions these figures are considered very conservative.

In Honduras, poor nutrition, alcoholism, work-related accidents and transportation accidents contribute greatly to the number of people with handicaps and/or in need of rehabilitation. There is a lack of adequate medical attention and services. There is also a multiplier effect where the handicapped individual affects the living circumstances of family members and relatives. Thus many

more than 630,000 people are affected by the situation relative to the condition of disabled people in Honduras.

Of the over 600,000 handicapped individuals, at least 20% are not able to work (138,600). Of the remaining 491,400, 50% are under 15 years of age. The remaining 245,000 individuals are adolescents and adults, of which 90% (221,130) are un-employed or under-employed. Thus approximately 360,000 people of employment age are affected.

5.0 EMPLOYMENT: SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Honduras is the least developed country in Central America. Its economy is structured on a base of tropical and sub-tropical agriculture, livestock, forestry and some mining. Bananas, coffee and timber dominate the country's growth prospects and for many years have accounted for more than 40% of the GNP. Silver, lead and zinc are mined for export, and frozen seafood is growing in importance as a source of foreign exchange. Puerto Cortes on the Atlantic coast has a free trade zone.

From 1975 through 1979, the Honduran economy grew at an annual rate of about 7 %, with an inflation rate between 6 and 10 %. The growth was attributable in large measure to the rapid increase of light manufacturing, particularly in San Pedro Sula. It was based on the assembly of components and the processing of raw agricultural materials. The economy has declined along with the economic fortunes of the region in general. It is heightened by political tensions in the region in general, Nicaragua in particular. It is characterized by disrupted trading patterns and tight credit conditions.

As a result of the flight of capital abroad, falling market demands for principal exports, high population growth and rising petroleum costs, the economy of the region has

suffered in general during the last 6-7 years with a result of negative growth during 1983 and 1984.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED YOUTH: Services and Opportunities

Vocational opportunities for disabled youth are founded on a special education and/or rehabilitation system. Employment itself can generally be broken down into the three sub-categories (Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus, 1985), of 1) competitive employment with/with-out support 2) enclaves/work crews in industry and 3) specialized sheltered work arangements.

The research team investigated the range of special education/rehabilitation support systems and vocational opportunities currently available in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. The short intensity of the time alloted for completion of this research did not permit on-site visits at other locations around the country.

The part of the report in this section dealing with special education/rehabilitation services extant in Honduras draws extensively upon documents prepared by two Peace Corps Volunteers: Vivienne Thompson, who prepared the material for a P.C. Module in this area and Mike McGee, who prepared a presentation regarding these services on behalf of the Foundation. Another important source of information was a PATH prepared document, Resources Available in Honduras-Serving the Handicapped. These three documents are

included in the appendix and may be consulted for further detail. There are presently more than seven major special education/rehabilitation programs/facilities in Honduras. Out of an estimated 400,000 physically or mentally handicapped individuals, there are approximately .4% or 1,500 receiving some type of educational, vocational or rehabilitative service. Although there are some government sponsored or associated programs, the majority of moderately to severely handicapped individuals are served via the private sector.

The government has now recognized the need for addressing special education by setting up a unit at the project level within its Ministry of Education. At present, the unit is not granted its own discrete budget and secure funds for its activity from other departments in Education and from outside agencies such as OAS and UNICEF. Its major project is the "Functioning and Organizing of Resource Rooms," with the goal of having at least one resource room teacher in each zone of the country by the end of next year with a total nunber of 30. This project is at the primary school level.

Other government sponsored facilities are the Centro de Investigacion and Rehabilitacion Especial (CIRE) serving 150 hearing impaired and mentally retarded youths ages 6 to 14 on a campus with dormitory in Tegucigalpa, and The Centro do

Capacitacion Especial (Special Ed. Training Center), a Social Welfare (Junta) sponsored program serving 95 handicapped students ages 12-21 in a separate day workshop setting covering the areas of sewing clothing, carpentry, manual arts and cooking. This program does not accept students with serious psychiatric or behavioral problems. It has recently piloted a handicrafts workshop for students with skills judged too limited to succeed in the other workshop areas. It is considering the continuance of this project at another site.

The Instituto Psicpedagogico "Juana Leclerc" serves 90 mentally retarded students ages 6-18 in educational and vocational programs. Although considered private, 40% of its funding does come from the state government, with the remainder made up by a combination of parent tuition and private/organizational donation. The school does not feel it has the staff to take care of the needs of the severely handicapped. The school has three programs 1) maturational/developmental for younger students, 2) pre-vocational/vocational and 3) a recently begun extension program serving 3 students who live outside of Tegucigalpa.

Students are to spend a minimum of two years in the prevocational program, rotating between different workshops in the areas of carpentry, sewing, cooking, baking and home management. They are also taught language and basic math as

well as generic job skills such as start/stop, tool handling, safety, hygiene and time management. School staff observe the students in all workshops and then select the most promising area to target for vocational training. The preferred placement for vocational training is on-the-job site.

Another potentially active school in vocational preparation in Tegucigalpa is the Escuela para Ciegos (School for the Blind) it is residential and offers services through primary school. Most students complete their junior high and senior high education in regular schools. The school is supported by the Association for the Blind, which has undertaken the L.300,000. construction of an Artisan/Industrial Center for the Blind in Santa Lucia, approximately 11 km. from the capital city. Since all capital has been consumed by construction, the association is seeking start-up funds to secure equipment. The anticipated focus of the site will be rehabilitation and vocational training for persons over age 14, who have gone through school and still need rehabilitation, or become blind after age 14. They intend to allow people to cycle through the facility so those from faraway towns can get access to the training in the production of house-hold items such as brooms, mops, brushes, linens, etc.

Fratenidad Betania, is a coed residence for physically handicapped adults, five of the residents work outside of the home in jobs such as selling lottery tickets, recording radio advertisements for a distributor, and monitoring geological information on a computer screen. The other seven are employed at the home via an Aid to Artisans Project. A family-like, independent living style is maintained, the home is managed by the residents. They are paid by piece work and are very close to financially self-supporting. Some students receive educational tutoring.

Other institutions providing support services and/or education for the handicapped include Instituto Sampedran de Educacion Especial (ISEE) in San Pedro Sula, serving 100-130 handicapped clients ages 0 to 31 years; Instituto Hondureno de Rehabilitacion, which as an adaptive equipment/wheelchair producation program associated with it and Sociedad Pro Asilo de Invalidos, an asylum for adults with no apparent rehabilitative program.

One other agency deserving of particular mention is the "Selective Employment" section of the Ministry of Labor. Its main objective is to bring "invalid" people into the workforce. One of its concerns is the national lottery law that gives preference to hiring the handicapped as ticket vendors. This department is also working with the Center

for Special Education Training to financially help a group of 4 students set up an independent tailoring shop with the assistance of a modest government loan.

7.0 LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

This section of the report is intended to convey the results of the research team's interview process. This section will focus on themes that emerged across the range of interviews. Each theme will be illustrated with interview quotes along with material drawn from notes taken during the interviews. This section gives a forum for the opinions of the interviewees.

The team interviewed forty-one people over a period of nine days. A complete list by name, title and agency is included in the appendix. The majority of the interviews were accomplished in the first five days of the project. The contacts averaged approximately one hour in length. At least two, usually three members of the research team were present at each interview. All interviews were conducted at the individual's place of work or other convenient setting of their choice.

The informants were chosen using a list of Foundation (FUHRIL) members as a starting point. The FUHRIL organization is an umbrella coalition of special education, training, rehabilitation and advocacy/support groups. The team looked for agencies, programs or individuals who had some relation to serving disabled youth. The initial list

expanded to include employers and other informants based upon references gleaned from the people initially contacted.

The documents reviewed were identified by the informants as sources of information. The Vermont team members did not know the informants or settings ahead of time, however the Honduran team members were knowledgeable about the majority of the informants and settings in the study.

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers and opportunities for the employment of disabled youth. This general framework provided the guiding basis for the interviews, it remained consistant over the course of the study. The team's relationship to the informants remained rather formal due to the intense schedule needed to accomplish the assigned task. The team found the informants to be open and articulate regarding the situation for disabled youth. The themes identified below emerged strongly enough across the spectrum of individuals and settings that the team felt confident as to their validity.

7.1 BARRIERS

The generally depressed economic condition of Honduras, characterized by high unemployment and under-employment affecting approximately one-half the total population emerged very strongly as a barrier to economic progress for handicapped youth.

In a discussion of employment opportunities for the graduates of a Government sponsored special education center, the sheltered workshop director put it bluntly, "There is no work in Honduras and those with jobs are underpaid." The President of the Association for the Blind, in describing his attempts to get assistance from commercial firms for the development of an Industrial Training Center for the Blind said. "When firms are economically depressed themselves, they can't help us." The Director-General of Employment told of a national law passed to guarantee a percentage of lottery ticket selling spots to 'invalids' and women with children. "The spots were already filled by the lottery ticket sellers union, when the law was passed. Therefore all we can do is to try to secures places via attrition. Even this is difficult, because the union feels that public sympathy for people with limitations may give them an unfair advantage as lottery agents."

As these comments illustrate, the impoverished economy puts pressure on a large majority of the population thus creating an even larger barrier to the handicapped in their competition for employment in tight market. The other result is that many handicapped individuals, their families and relatives live under conditions of poverty which compound the problems which would ordinarily arise on the basis of their handicap alone.

The economic conditions interact with an attitude in the general public that is characterized by either avoidance or de-valuing of people with handicaps. An international development officer characterized this attitude as, "Why hire the handicapped when there are many 'whole people' available for the same price ?" The person in charge of the association for the blind mentioned earlier put it this way, "In this society, even if you just lose a single finger, people think you can't do any work at all." One of the lottery ticket sellers, a man with physical handicaps who achieves mobility with the assistance of a rolling scooter-like device built by his father, must take a taxi far enough to find bus drivers who know him, otherwise the busses will not stop to pick him up when he is out of his local neighborhood. Orquedia Cateno said that, "If people are disabled, other people don't want to be around them. if with friends, it's o.k., but with strangers we experience

public avoidance. If people don't know them, they afraid to associate."

Another variation of this attitude is that job development for disabled people must wait until the economic situation improves for the non-handicapped population. One potential employer indicated this by expressing the feeling that one cannot worry about employment opportunities for a relative minority of the country when the majority are either poor or without jobs.

These comments illustrate how the situation of limited employment opportunities interacts with public attitude to make it very difficult for people with handicaps to demonstrate their capabilities in the competitive market.

As the research team spoke with individuals who had overcome their difficult circumstances and been able to secure jobs, a thread emerged regarding self-concept and attitude toward work. It is related to the two themes already mentioned above.

Maria Sylveria Rubio, the primary school teacher mentioned in the Problems and Promises section of this report related the idea that many individuals with disabilities suffer from a low self-concept, a poor estimation of their own ability to accomplish some meaningful employment. She argued for the need to,

"recognize limits, but not focus on them." One of the reasons she gave for her own determination to secure a job was "to demonstrate to others" that it could be done. Orquedia Centeno described the problem as a "lack of maturity, a lack of understanding of the seriousness and importance of work." One employer described a situation where a job had been set up for some individuals who had been residing in an asylum. After awhile the individuals decided to give up the job and remain at the asylum where no demands were placed on them.

Orquedia and Maria both felt that families have been barriers in many cases. Maria said the family, "either ignores (the problem) or over-protects (the individual)." Orquedia felt that families, "have not given enough responsibility. They (the disabled youth) must become conscious of the fact that they have responsibilities and feel obligated to carry them out. One of the most important factors is treatment by the family in the home." Teachers at Juana LeClerc, one of the private-based schools serving primarily middle and upper-class families described their frustration as, "You can't go any faster with the student, than with the family." The staff has encountered reluctance by parents to have their children involved in vocational training in areas such as yard work and domestic cleaning. They related how many families are so grateful if their

child secures a job, they readily accept poor pay. "The family wants to maintain a friendly relationship, they feel (employment) is a favor."

Another major barrier described by those interviewed is a lack of initiative and/or support from upper levels of government and some other agencies. The people interviewed characterized this situation as a result of lack of awareness and interest in the plight of disabled youth.

The Education Director for A.I.D., Henry Reynolds, indicated that, " the tremendous lack of resources is a problem for services to handicapped." Thus, special education is not a top priority because of the overall need to improve general education in a situation where resources are severely limited. Staff at the Ministry of Education are concerned that, "a change-over in goverment, may result in changes within the Ministry of Education just when it is becoming aware of the need (for service to handicapped children). Staff at the Ministry of Labor asked for help from consumers and others to bring the attention of upper level Ministers to the need for, "hard-hitting programs to employ the handicapped."

Another aspect of this barrier is lack of legislative support for the rights of disabled individuals. Maria Rubio and others indicated an inability to secure social security

benefits when disabled. She also described her difficulty securing a job as a teacher due to wording in a law regarding the hiring of people "with limitations" as teachers. The Director-General expressed his frustration over the failure in 1980 to obtain passage of a law that would have guaranteed 1% of jobs to the handicapped.

This barrier also manifests itself in a general lack of special education and rehabilitative services in the country. Staff at the Ministry of Education indicated that the only government program is the Resource Room Project which serves mildly handicapped children at thirty locations around the country. The other education services to more seriously handicapped individuals are through private sources. The Director of the Association for the Blind expressed frustration at the severe lack of services for children after age 15. One goal of their proposed Industrial Center is to provide, "an alternative for older people who become blind after age 14, or for those who have gone through school and need further rehabilitation." The Director of Talleres, a government sponsored sheltered workshop indicated that some students age out of the welfare sponsored CIRE school, but are,"not accepted (at Talleres) due to psychiatric or behavior problems." So it is apparent that even of those fortunate few who can obtain some primary/middle school special education in the capital city,

the more seriously handicapped may turn 14 or 15 and have no place to continue their education or receive some type of service.

7.2 OPPORTUNITIES

This section is an examination of the interview notes for themes associated with successful attainment of employment by disabled people.

One aspect of success that emerged early and through-out the interviews was the importance of persistance. Maria Rubio felt "religion gave her the courage to be strong," to persist, not to take no for an answer, to continue to use friendly, firm persuasion to reach her goals. Orquedia persisted in her efforts, to learn to lip-read, to get an education, to secure a job, and then to achieve advancement. She said, "I worked very hard, constantly, until I got to the point of being a superior lip-reader." She persisted in seeking a personal interview, and in getting an opportunity to demonstrate her competence. "Let me do the job, without pay , under observation. If I can't do it, put me back (to my old job). If I can (do it), then give me the job." Persistance in the face of barriers can turn some situations into opportunities.

Another aspect associated with success is the support of others. One example of this comes from an employer, Jose Anzoategui of Caprisa. He felt disabled people have many useful abilities and should be given opportunities to put those capabilities to work on the job. " I feel even people

without apparent impairments, all have some limits. The problem is some people have limits you can see and this limits your thinking about their ability. For example, if one person has L.10,000 in gold and another has L.10,000 in silver, they would be equally rich. One person has certain abilities and capacities and another has a different set of abilities, but both are equally valuable to society."

The members of Fraternidad Betania are another example of how the support of others can sustain the individual in difficult circumstances. In this case, the support comes from the handicapped individuals who live and manage their home together. The home also provides an employment opportunity for some members via the Aid to Artisans project. For some members it serves as a supportive base from which to function. Maria Rubio also credits the support of others to helping her remain persistant in over-coming the barriers presented by her handicap. Her co-workers shared her job duties for one year so she could continue to receive an income when otherwise she would have had no financial assistance. Teachers at Juana LeClerc observed that their graduates suffer from lack of social support once they leave the school to work and live in the community.

The support of parents for the efforts of their children is also perceived as being a key ingredient in

opportunities for successful employment. The staff at Juana LeClerc were explicit. Their most successful post school placement "was set up and supported by the parent. They must be committed." The staff gave examples of cases where a student was employed, had some difficulty, and lacking parent support, "washed their hands of the school after placement. They could have used help in these emerging stituations."

In some cases the support of others becomes more organized, more formal and can be described as collaboration. Collaboration can extend so far as to include the creation of independent, competitive work sites. Collaboration emerged as another theme associated with securing employment opportunities. Gloria Ponce, Director of The Center for Special Education, a government sponsored training center, feels that these independent cooperatives constitute the best, current opportunity for students graduating from the Center. The school is presently assisting a group of four recent graduates to set up an independent tailoring operation. The Ministry of Labor's Selective Employment Department has offered a loan to help them get started. Fraternidad Betania and the Wheelchair/Adaptive Equipment Production Project are also other examples of collaboration as a route to employment. The Fraternidad Christiana, which was instrumental in

assisting Maria Rubio and others to overcome the barriers presented by physical handicaps is another example of people with handicaps grouping together to create opportunites where the usual customary routes do not as yet exist for them. Maria Rubio felt very strongly that, "We need handicapped individuals at the organizational level, it results in higher degrees of independence (for others with handicaps.)

Education is also seen as an underlying foundation to the creation of job opportunities for people with disabilities. Liz Casperson, supervisor for Peace Corps activity in Special Education stressed the "need for continuity, to translate successful pilot projects into implementation, to train key staff, to provide pre-vocational and vocational experiences in agriculture and industry." The Director-General of the Ministry of Labor indicated that previous studies have established the need to "establish training centers by zones, to focus on the use of rural, raw materials (for production). The proposed Industrial Center for the Blind is founded on the belief that the provision of education and training will result in increased opportunities. "If we can prove their worth (via production of industrial items at the center), it proves the physically handicappd don't have to be limited."

In order to get into the Center for Special Education, a student "must have skills for (entrance) in to the workshop." Previous education is the main route to achieving those pre-requisite skills. Ned Van Steenwyk, International Development Consultant for A.I.D. said, "From the perspective of the private sector, vocational education in areas of industrial mechanics and machine maintainance are high priorities."

One other thread that ran through the interviews was the importance of connections. While informal/formal connections alone are not sufficient to obtain a job, in many cases it was the use of some type of personal contact or intermediary that facilitated or got the disabled person over the final hurdle to securing a job. A parent related how his son, after many years of special education at a variety of schools abroad, came home to live. He has successfully held two different jobs, one in a lumber warehouse and another at a disco. Both jobs were arranged at the suggestions of friends of the family who were willing and supportive of giving the young man an opportunity in their business.

Maria Rubio who had the education, the support of others and the personal persistance to secure employment, needed the boost from a mutual friend to overcome the last obstacle in obtaining her teaching position.

This is not to imply that connections in any way make up for or substitute for the ability to perform a particular job, but in a tight market the personal connection may be needed to create an opportunity or potential opening, thus enabling the disabled person the chance to demonstrate his/her competence and employability.

8:0 ANALYSIS AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In a recently published journal article entitled, "From School to Work: A Vocational Transition Model for Handicapped Students," Wehman, Kregel and Barcus (1985) presented a three stage model of vocational transition for handicapped youth: school instruction, planning for the transition process and placement in meaningful employment. It is helpful to frame this project's analysis and general observations along the lines of those three components.

Education is the under-lying basis for increasing the probability that handicapped youth will be employable as young adults. Few handicapped individuals will be successful in achieving any form of independent, normalized living and working situation in the absence of an educational program that prepares them in the critical areas needed to reach their potential to function. A generally evolving body of opinion identifies the following as 'best practices' in the area of secondary special education: a functional curriculum that provides direct instruction in life skill areas needed to attain maximum independence, the provision of education and vocational in the most normal, integrated settings possible, and the use of community-based instruction in areas of vocational, domestic, community and leisure/recreation activities.

At present, only a very small number of handicapped Honduran youth have access to any type of educational service. As indicated previously, most special education for the population of concern is provided by private agencies in the capital or other major cities and thus available to a small proportion of primarily upper and middle income groups. Interviews with staff at these facilties indicate that they are aware of the best practices mentioned above, but are severely limited by a lack of resources and trained staff. Since this project was scheduled for early December, a time when all of the major facilities were closed for vacation it was not possible to observe first hand the implementation of actual training programs.

One area of concern is the lack of availability of services for severely and behaviorally handicapped children and also the general lack of services for youth in the age 15 and above group. This is compounded by a lack of programs for youth and young adults who become disabled when in their teens, there are no rehabilitation services available at present.

A bright spot seems to be the present degree of parent interest and involvement in the special education of the children who are currently able to receive it. Given the general lack of services, parent advocacy and tenacity are

key ingredients in securing services for children. The limited opportunities act as a selection mechanism which results in the present group of parents being a potentially strong, articulate group to improve the situation in special education generally. All the parents interviewed had visions of system improvement that ranged far beyond the unique, individual needs of their own child. They seem to realize that cooperation is the only way to multiply the effect they can have under the very difficult circumstance they face.

The government's support of the expansion of Resource Rooms to all departments of the country in the next year or two is also a stimulus for increased parent and professional interest in the field of special education. Although these programs are intended for mildly handicapped children in public, primary schools, the arrival of a trained special educator into a school where none was before raises the awareness of everyone to the potential for providing an effective education to meet special needs. The team heard of parents of handicapped children bringing their children to the local school for the first time to see if any help or suggestions could be provided.

The second stage towards achieving employment for handicapped youth is a planned transition process requiring coordination between various parties such as individual,

parent, school, rehabilitation or technical center, employer and other agencies. This process has two key features: a long lead time to insure early planning, and a written agreement or contract that lays out the plan and responsibilities of all concerned.

Given the dearth of secondary special education programs, the transition planning mentioned above has not been able to evolve. The closest approximation to this type of planning was described to the team by staff at Juana Le Clerc who realize the need for school, parent, employer communication. The staff at this school also realize that on-site placement and education are most desirable.

There is also the realization by the various member groups of the FUHRIL foundation that attempts must be made to increase inter-group as well as inter-agency cooperation in the whole area of special education and rehabilitation. This organization is the recent recepient of a U.S./A.I.D. funded three-year grant that will foster the development of the Foundation as an umbrella organization one of whose goals will be to stimulate governmental inter-agency coordination as well as to maximize the coordination of technical assistance agencies that focus on special education and rehabilitation. This goal is also supported by Peace Corps staff.

The third stage is an actual employment outcome for a handicapped child. There are many possibilities, they will

vary from community to community. The team observed and became aware of a whole range of actual employment sites in Tegucigalpa which could accommodate a wide range of individual needs and capabilities. There were examples of individuals in competitive employment such as the shoe factory. The team heard of individuals who had received special education and then secured competitive employment, such as graduates from the school for the blind. The team did not come across any examples of individuals who received continuing on the job support as a necessity to maintain a position in the competitive market.

Additionally, there were instances of specialized sheltered workshops such as the wheelchair/adaptive equipment project and special production oriented settings such as the Aid to Artisans project located at Fraernidad Betania.

In order to accommodate a wide variety of individuals with unique needs spread across a wide range of handicapping conditions it is necessary to try to achieve a wide variety of employment options. This necessity is also dictated by the peculiarity of local economic conditions. the same set of options may not be able to exist at all sites or localities, but nevertheless it is very desirable to plan for a variety of choices and degrees of support.

9.0 MAIN FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

At present neither special education nor rehabilitation are integrated into the human services system of Honduras. This has profoundly limited economic opportunity for disabled youth. Certainly this report documents isolated examples of programs, services and efforts that reflect the existing potential to significanty have impact on the lives of people with handicapping conditions or disabilities. Given the very real barriers to progress, improvement in large part depends on the efforts of the few dedicated individuals now working in this area to link their activity to the work of other agencies and individuals and to multiply their effects to the greatest extent possible.

Long term needs such as increased special education and expanded employment opportunities for people with handicapping conditions are facilitated by governmental support structures created and maintained via legislation. A major route to the realization of these long term needs via institutionalized support is to expand the base of awareness among the general population as a whole, and among relevant government departments, private agencies, employers and affected individuals in particular.

The FUHRIL foundation has recently received a major U.S./A.I.D. grant. Since the purpose of the grant is to

promote rehabilitation and special education in Honduras through the auspices of FUHRIL as an umbrella organization of fifteen participating organizations it may be fruitful to examine the intended grant activities and use them as a basis for framing some general and specific recommendations.

One of the primary activities will be the implementation of a public awareness campaign beginning in the Central District and eventually spreading out via the use of trained volunteers, conferences, printed materials and media sources. Agencies seeking to provide further assistance in this much needed area should examine their activity in light of what the FUHRIL project is accomplishing. There may be a need to use small grant projects to focus on a more person-to-person level such as to support small workshops and presentations to business groups, government councils, groups of handicapped individuals, parents, etc. These efforts should go beyond Tegucigalpa to other areas of economic concentration such as San Pedro Sula. There is a need to provide disabled individuals with a forum to approach potential employers to make their abilities known. Recent GLARP produced seminars have been well received. There is a need to expand these to other topical areas such as professional attitude and responsibilties, and family involvement in the education or rehabilitation process.

Another major focus of the FUHRIL grant will be to sponsor training for special education and health professionals. In securing or supplementing this training particular attention should be to provide professional development that stresses the concepts of a functional, longitudinal curriculum which leads to vocational skills such as staying on task, adequate rate of production, quality, etc. and other skills necessary to the work environment such as sociability, appropriate dress and hygeine habits, and mobility, etc. There is a need for existing educational services to examine their present curriculums against the criteria of functionality. Disabled students need an early start towards acquiring the skills eventually needed for successful employment. They cannot afford to waste any time.

Professional training should also emphasize the need for integrated school services where handicapped individuals get the opportunity to learn what is expected for success in normal environments and where the community learns of the potential of handicapped individuals to be successful employees. Integrated situations are critical to providing handicapped individuals the chance to develop the social and interpersonal skills they will need to be employed in the future. The professional training should also focus on the use of community sites as training locations. Not only do

these environments actually expose handicapped students to the real world demands, their use also facilitates communication between training personnel and potential employees. The use of real business situations allows the fostering of the concept that special education and rehabilitation can provide a real service to employers by training and providing a pool of qualified workers.

Professional training should also focus on the transition from secondary special education to actual employment. This process entails the early involvemnt of students, parents, educators and other agencies in cooperative planning and the development of agreements or contracts that detail roles, responsibilities and intended outcomes.

Another aspect of the FUHRIL grant involves the creation of three employment generation activities (wheelchair, broom and toy manufacturing). While these activities will be beneficial to approximately 80 individuals, there is the need to foster the development of a continuum or range of employment opportunities. It is recommended that technical assistance focus on such activities as market analysis to identify the perceived needs of employers. Two industries that may provide opportunity in the near future are the production of apparel and wood products, especially furniture. There is also a

perceived need in the area of industrial mechanical maintainance. Another area of potential growth and opportunity is agro-business particularly in the areas of fruit/vegetable and flower production.

There are also potential opportunities outside of the more formal industry, such as those provided by small, independent, micro-business or community cottage industry. These may provide a chance for handicapped individuals with specialized training to create their own niche. There is a lack of creative exploration or entrepreneurial investigation of these opportunities. Technical assistance in this area would be very beneficial.

Given the lack of development in human service systems and protective legislation, one must consider methods to assist disabled youth that capitalize on the existing avenues of opportunity. Since education, training and a generally improved economic situation are not realistic expectations in the near future, it is prudent to direct some short-term projects that might assist disabled youth via the provision of support, assistance in collaboration and expoitation of connections in the form of small projects that are aimed at selected targets of opportunity derived from the input of interested business people. Collaboration with other agencies working in related areas such as the National Employment Office, CADERH, the Peace Corps and

Goodwill Industries would allow small efforts to take advantage of the other ongoing activites within these agencies. Dependency on the efforts of already over-burdened volunteers are not likely to be successful. Projects that support the efforts of individuals to link up with already institutionalized agencies and that provide the little bit of extra assistance needed to enhance or expand their efforts to include disabled youth have greater chance of success.

10.0 PERSONAL CLOSING STATEMENTS

10.1 Recommendations of Rolando Antonio Alvarez

1. The problem that exist with special education in our country is due among other things to the lack of a clear concept about what integrated Special Education is and to a lack of a priority policy for the handicapped.

2. The State through the (appropriate) corresponding (agencies) organisms should assume responsibility for integrated Special Education.

3. The State through the Secretary of Public Education create a structure that directs Special Education and the mechanisms for its multisensory and interinstitutional coordination so as to take greater advantage of resources and services; that creation of this structure have a coordinating advisory committee made up of specialists.

4. The National Council for Rehabilitation (integral) include the private institutions, adding the formulation of policy that refers to professional education, establishes a registry of handicapped and creates infrastructure in the Ministry of Health that assists the people and makes known their work.

5. The Ministry of Public Education propose to and solicit from the National Congress laws that protect professional

education and incorporate the services of handicapped persons.

6. The National budget of income and expenses include a line item for rehabiliation and special education, assigning to those institutions involved the funds necessary for execution of the programs.

7. Orient parents and families so that they can support petitions made to the authorities on legal matters and others relative to the creation of services (for handicapped).

8. That laws on employment opportunities for the handicapped be promoted, and that a law providing incentives for private businesses for employing the handicapped.

9. Integrate the professional training programs for the handicapped within the institutions for technical education.

10. Promote arts and crafts and agro-business programs to take greater advantage of national resources, and that above all the production be destined for exportation given the difficult possibilities for local (in country) sales. Potential programs include the following:

A. Arts and Crafts

1. Woodwork

2. Fiber and reed works (baskets)

3. Ceramics

4. Others

B. Agro-business

1. Nurseries for plants

2. Exportation of flowers, natural and artificial

3. Farm work

4. Necklaces made from natural seed

5. Baskets for floral arrangments

6. Leather crafts, starting with the tanning

7. Others

Personal Opinions on the Seminar

1. I have very good impressions about the seminar as much about what was done in Guatemala as well as what was done in Honduras, all of which was very practical.

2. Personally, I felt that the time available for this work was too short given the quality, intensity and immense amount of information required for the report.

3. It has allowed me to learn more about my country and what is happening in integrated rehabilitation, which will serve me well in the future because it is my field of work.

4. I was able to learn better investigative techniques.

5. I felt or learned that there exists in my country excellent handwork, it is a great pity that the economic situation is the major limiting factor to progress.

6. I was able to appreciate that even though Honduras is the second poorest country of the Americas the people who work in this field have multiplied their efforts and at least have clear view of what is being done and we have not lost sight of the scientific training process.

7. Nevertheless (in spite of the above) we Hondurans who collaborated in researching this report have felt that we

still need much education and training given the fact that this is a process that never ends.

10.2 Comments of Daniel N. Kucij

This project provided the opportunity to meet many special individuals. I have a great deal of respect for the spirit of the Hondurans that we interviewed. They are working to make progress under very difficult conditions and while much remains to be accomplished, there is a sense of dedication and cooperation that is necessary for success.

Most of the people interviewed are well aware of the nature of the problems and their potential solutions, I hope that future small projects will be able to be focused in support of local efforts and provide technical assistance towards enhancing these efforts by providing resources where local projects need them, by fostering cooperative, integrative actions, by assisting both the planning and implementation phases of projects in an on-going manner.

Despite diligent efforts on the part of the research team and others who assisted us, it was apparent that the scope of the research objectives was beyond the reach of our resources and time available. I would recommend that future projects of this type take advantage of some additional host country preparation and groundwork prior to the actual initiation of a project. Much time could be saved by

advance local preparations. I would also recommend that a future effort be directed to expand the scope of this investigation beyond the capital of Tegucigalpa to include at least some of the other major cities and some rural areas. We regretted being unable to visit areas outside of Tegucigalpa, but there was so much to accomplish that time did not permit us to travel elsewhere.

Also since the visit took place during school vacation and just before the Christmas holiday it was rather a "slack" time for activity. I would recommend some additional follow-up that could focus on the actual operation of existing programs which would result in our being able to better focus and specify recommendations.

All in all the project was personally very gratifying for me, I appreciated the opportunity to extend my professional experience to another part of the world and would be glad participate in further activities of this type if requested.

11.0 REFERENCES

Fundacion Hondurena de Rehabilitacion e Integracion del Limitado: Presentacion, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1985

Hasazi, S., Preskill, H., Gordon, L., and Collins, M. (1982). Factors Associated with the Employment Status of Handicapped Youth. American Education Research Association, New York.

Hernandez, S. G. Informe Sobre los Servicios de Rehabilitacion en Honduras, Ministerio de Trabajo de Espana, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1985

Honduran Economic Research Dept., Figures of Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1984

P.A.T.H. Center for Information, Resources Serving the Handicapped in Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1984

Reid, M. S., Salembier, G., & Finck, K. (eds.) Resource Guide for Teachers in Secondary Special Education Programs: A Community-Based Approach, University of Vermont, 1984

U. S. Dept. of State, Background Notes: Honduras, Sept. 1984

U. S. Peace Corps, Training Module: Special Education and Rehabilitation, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1984

Vermont Vocational Training Network Horizons: A Transition to the Future, Vermont A. R. C. , Aug. 1985

Wehman, P. , Kregal, J., and Barcus, J.M. (1985) From School to Work: A Vocational Transition Model for Handicapped Students, Exceptional Children, (52), 1, 25-37

12.0 ATTACHMENTS

A. List of Interviews and Contacts

B. FUHRIL Presentation Report

C. Report by Spanish Ministry

D. Peace Corps Training Module